(c) Of the many initiatives taken by the National Commission on Population to help the process of population stabilization in the country, a few are indicated below:

- Recognizing that development and demography have a close inter-relationship, an immediate effort was made to bring together all the relevant Ministries/Departments and a Strategic Support Group of Secretaries of the concerned Departments was created on the basis of whose recommendations several Working/Advisory Groups/Task Forces were constituted by the NCP and concept papers prepared by several Ministries bringing out how they could reorient their programmes to address demographic concerns also. The reports/recommendations of these Groups were forwarded to the concerned Departments/ Divisions of the Planning Commission for being incorporated in the sectoral programmes of the Tenth Five Year Plan.

- Regular review of the impact of the Family Welfare programmes in the high fertility States and the growth rate vis-a-vis national level.

- Identification of 133 districts having TFR > 3.5 for focussed action for population stabilization followed by a Conference of DMs of these districts to discuss and decide about various matters relating to population stabilization.

- Selection of social, economic and demographic indicators for monitoring purpose and mapping and ranking of 569 districts of the country on the basis of 12 such indicators with a view to know the position of each district in relation to them.

- To enable better integration of research related findings for policy formulation two Conferences of demographic research organizations were convened.

- To understand the actual impact of the national family welfare programmes several field visits in the high fertility

areas were made so that the findings could be made use of for restrategising the present programmes and for working out the area specific field level initiatives involving PRIs, NGOs, Women Self-Help Groups and Youth Organizations.

- To further facilitate and help operationalise the convergence of the ongoing social sector programmes and better utilization of the human resources, two Ministerial Conferences were organized.
- A Conference of State Population Commissions was organized where a detailed review of the implementation of the State Population Policies were undertaken.This has given an opportunity for sharing the experiences of better performing States vis-a-vis States which are witnessing high population growth now.
- The NCP also organized a Conference of NGOs with a view to involve voluntary organizations in population stabilization programmes. This was done as part of the effort to build up a vigorous people's movement involving the civil society with the active participation of PRIs, NGOs, VOs, Self-Help Groups and Youth Organizations for formulating and implementing population stabilization programmes.

(d) The full Conference of the National Commission on Population was held only once so far. The first meeting of the Commission gave a clear and categorical message regarding the widespread national concern about the country's burgeoning Population and the need to impart a sense of urgency for taking effective steps to accelerate the process of demographic stabilization.

Eradication of Poverty

3058. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about China's drive to eradicate poverty;

(a) if so, whether Government agree that poverty coupled with population growth are the main obstacles for the development of the country;

(b) whether Government also agree that a credible national strategy for removal of the mass poverty requires a strong commitment to acceleration of the economic growth and expansion of the employment opportunities in the framework of a sustainable use of natural resources;

(c) if so, whether Government have given serious thought on eradication of poverty; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) The Government has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty in the country. It comprises of (i) accelerated economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through provision of basic minimum services; and (iii) targeted anti-poverty programmes. The Tenth Five Year Plan envisages that if the GDP growth target of 8 percent per annum is attained, the poverty ratio would be reduced by 5 per centage points by 2007 and 15 percentage points by 2012 and 50 million employment opportunities would be generated over the period of five years.

Special status to Bihar

†3059. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(c) the criteria for according special category status to the states;

(d) the States which come in the special category status;

(e) whether Bihar and some other States fulfil the above criteria;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.